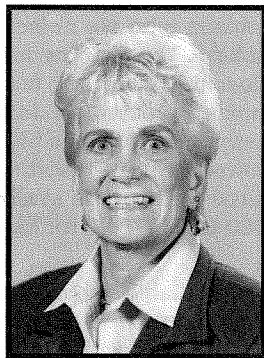


# Hammerstrom's

for the people  
in the 17th Senate District

# Hotline



State Senator

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OCTOBER 25, 2004



**ENJOY AREA'S PIONEER WINE TRAIL** Eight wineries make up Southeastern Michigan's Pioneer Wine Trail, the state's newest wine tour. Wine enthusiasts can tour vineyards, meet vintners, and sample some of Michigan's finest wines as they drive through the beautiful countryside of the Irish Hills region and beyond. This area is the site of the first vineyards grown in the state and is host to world-class, award-winning wines. Whether just passing through, or planning to make it an all-day event, Southeastern Michigan's Pioneer Wine Trail promises to provide Michigan residents and visitors wines of a quality that people often fly long distances to experience. For more information about Southeastern Michigan's Pioneer Wine Trail, please visit [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) and click on the Travel and Recreation icon. The website provides maps for driving tours for each of Michigan's four wine trails, as well as information about each winery included on the tour.

**DID YOU KNOW?** There are 40 wineries in Michigan, welcoming 600,000 guests each year and making up a highly successful part of the state's agriculture and tourism industries.

**STILL TIME TO REQUEST ABSENTEE BALLOT** Michigan residents can request an absentee voter ballot by visiting their city or township clerk's office through 4 p.m. Monday, November 1. To request an absentee ballot be mailed to their home, residents have until 2 p.m. Saturday, October 30 to submit a written request to their city or township clerk. Upon receiving a mailed ballot, voters must complete and return it to the clerk's office by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Absentee ballot applications are also available online at [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote). Registered voters can obtain absentee ballots if they are 60 or older, unable to attend the polls without the assistance of another person, expecting to be out of town on Election Day, in jail awaiting arraignment or trial, unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons, or appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of their precinct of residence. It is important to note that residents who have registered to vote by mail or via a voter registration drive and have never voted in Michigan are not eligible to vote by absentee ballot in their first election. They must vote in person at their precinct. This restriction does not apply to overseas voters, voters who are handicapped or voters who are 60 or older. For more information in regard to voting by absentee ballot, please visit the Michigan Secretary of State's website at [www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos), or contact your city or township clerk's office.

**STATE TO HELP UNINSURED ADULTS QUIT SMOKING** Under a program which began October 1, smokers who are uninsured in Michigan may qualify for a free two-month supply of nicotine patches or gum to help them quit smoking. The nicotine patches or gum will be supplied to uninsured Michigan adults through the free "I Can Quit" Telephone Coaching Program, funded by the Michigan Department of Community Health. The program is funded with \$1.5 million in smoking prevention dollars. Each year, Michigan spends \$881 million in its Medicaid program alone treating tobacco-related illnesses. According to MDCH, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease among all populations in the United States—resulting in 400,000 deaths annually, 15,000 of them in Michigan. Funding for the nicotine patches or gum is limited so it will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Uninsured individuals can call the "I Can Quit" Program at 1-800-480-QUIT (7848) for help in stopping smoking. Assistance is free and confidential.

**REHABILITATION OF STATE'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS ENCOURAGED** Legislation to make tax incentives available to developers who rehabilitate historic buildings was recently signed into law. A key component of the Creating Opportunities for Renewed Economies package, Senate Bill 1206, now Public Act 396, amends the Neighborhood Enterprise Act to allow for the redevelopment of qualified historic buildings. Under the legislation, developers are eligible for the state historic tax credit and the full benefit of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone tax abatement. The Creating Opportunities for Renewed Economies (CORE) package is geared toward expanding and coordinating many state economic programs to operate more effectively, as well as provide incentives for growth in cities and villages.

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If you would like to receive future issues of Hammerstrom's Hotline via e-mail, please contact me at [SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov).